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ALL POSTS FOR PAO, USSOCOM FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OPRC, KPAO

SUBJECT: WHA GUIDANCE, JULY 12, 2004

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Summary of Contents:

WHA Press Guidance, July 12 (Venezuela)

End Summary.

WHA PRESS GUIDANCE, JULY 12, 2004:

-- VENEZUELA: CHAVEZ ACCUSATIONS --

Q. ANY RESPONSE TO CHAVEZ CLAIMS THAT THE U.S. IS FUNDING
OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES? IS THE U.S. FUNDING ANY PART
OF THE ELECTION PROCESS? IF SO, HOW MUCH AND TO WHOM?

A: WE CATEGORICALLY REJECT THESE STATEMENTS AND ACCUSATIONS.
THIS IS CLEARLY AN ATTEMPT TO DIVERT ATTENTION AWAY FROM THE
VENEZUELAN PEOPLE'S CONTINUED EFFORTS TO OVERCOME POLITICAL
POLARIZATION AND REACH A CONSTITUTIONAL, PEACEFUL,
DEMOCRATIC, AND ELECTORAL SOLUTION TO THE CURRENT IMPASSE, IN
ACCORDANCE WITH OAS RESOLUTION 833.

THE REFERENDUM IN VENEZUELA IS NOT ABOUT THE UNITED STATES.
IT IS A VENEZUELAN EXERCISE IN DEMOCRACY.

THE UNITED STATES PROVIDES FUNDING TO GROUPS THAT PROMOTE
DEMOCRACY AND STRENGTHEN CIVIL SOCIETY IN VENEZUELA. THESE
PROGRAMS ARE NON-PARTISAN AND OPEN TO ALL PARTIES.

BOTH PRO-GOVERNMENT POLITICAL PARTY MEMBERS AND
PARLIAMENTARIANS AND MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION HAVE BENEFITED
FROM THE PROGRAMS. ALL PARTIES ARE ROUTINELY INVITED TO
EVENTS AND PROGRAMS.

WE ARE CONCERNED THAT GRANTEES AND OPPOSITION MEMBERS ARE
INCREASINGLY SUBJECT TO VERBAL AND PHYSICAL HARASSMENT FOR
SIMPLY EXERCISING THEIR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS.

CONTINUED HARASSMENT OF THE LEADERS OF THE CIVIL-SOCIETY
ORGANIZATION, SUMATE, AND THIS WEEKEND'S ATTACK ON SUPPORTERS
OF MAYOR OF BARUTA, HENRIQUE CAPRILES, IMPRISONED ON
POLITICALLY-INSPIRED CHARGES, AS WELL AS THE JUNE 27, 2004
VIOLENCE AGAINST CHAVEZ ELECTORAL SUPPORTERS IN ALTO PRADO
ALL UNDERMINE A PEACEFUL, DEMOCRATIC SOLUTION TO VENEZUELA'S
POLITICAL IMPASSE.
POWELL

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